

# RESEARCH BRIEF

PLANNING, INNOVATION, AND ACCOUNTABILITY  
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## Postsecondary Enrollment, Persistence, and Degree Attainment

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### ABSTRACT

This brief summarizes the results from the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) postsecondary data reports. Each year, data regarding Virginia Beach City Public Schools (VBCPS) graduates are provided to the NSC that is then matched to university enrollment records at participating institutions across the nation. The reports provided by the NSC document the number and percentage of VBCPS graduates who enrolled in college immediately after high school, during the first year after high school, and during the first two years after high school. It also provides information on postsecondary persistence from freshman to sophomore year and degree attainment trends for VBCPS graduates. Postsecondary education data are provided for the division overall, by student subgroup, and by school. The results show that between 56 and 61 percent of VBCPS graduates from the 2007 to 2018 graduating classes enrolled in a postsecondary institution immediately after high school. The percentage of VBCPS graduates who enrolled in a postsecondary institution two years after graduation ranged from 67 to 72 percent. Once enrolled in college, 82 to 87 percent reenrolled for their sophomore year. Approximately 39 percent of 2012 VBCPS graduates obtained a postsecondary degree within six years. Higher percentages of females, Asian students, non-economically disadvantaged, and non-special education students enrolled in postsecondary institutions compared to other subgroups.

### INTRODUCTION

This brief is based on data reports provided by the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC). The NSC collects data that represents approximately 98 percent of all students enrolled in a postsecondary institution from over 3,600 colleges and universities that participate in the educational reporting service.<sup>1</sup> This information enables schools and school divisions to track their graduates as they continue through the educational pipeline. The school division began subscribing to the NSC service in 2004 and has provided the NSC with graduation data from the Class of 2001 through the most current Class of 2018.

### METHOD

Each fall VBCPS provides the NSC with a list of all combined term graduates.<sup>2</sup> Based on the requirements of the NSC, this list contains graduates' first name, last name, date of birth, graduation date, diploma type, high school attended, and demographic information. Using this information, the NSC utilizes a proprietary algorithm to match these student records with data provided by each participating postsecondary institution. The results are detailed reports that illustrate college enrollment trends for VBCPS alumni. The following sections summarize the data provided by the NSC based on trends in division- and school-level postsecondary enrollment, persistence, and completion.

#### KEY TOPICS

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**POSTSECONDARY ENROLLMENT**

**Immediately After High School**

The following figures illustrate the percentage of high school graduates who enrolled in a postsecondary institution during the fall semester immediately following high school graduation. In order to be included in this percentage, a student must have enrolled following graduation between August 15 and October 31. Figure 1 shows the overall division-level enrollment percentages for the graduating classes of 2007 through 2018. Additionally, the institution level (two-year or four-year) in which these students enrolled is illustrated. For the Class of 2018, 57 percent of graduates enrolled in a postsecondary institution immediately following high school graduation. With regard to institutional level, a consistently higher percentage of graduates enrolled in four-year institutions immediately after graduation compared to the two-year institutions. Enrollment in a four-year postsecondary institution has ranged from 33 to 40 percent, with a trend of increasing four-year enrollment since the Class of 2012. Enrollment in a two-year postsecondary institution has ranged from 17 to 25 percent. For the Class of 2018, the percentage of students enrolling in a four-year institution immediately after graduation was maintained at 40 percent. Enrollment in a two-year institution declined for the Class of 2018 to 17 percent compared to 20 percent for the prior graduating class.

**Figure 1: Division Postsecondary Enrollment by Year and Level - Immediately After High School**

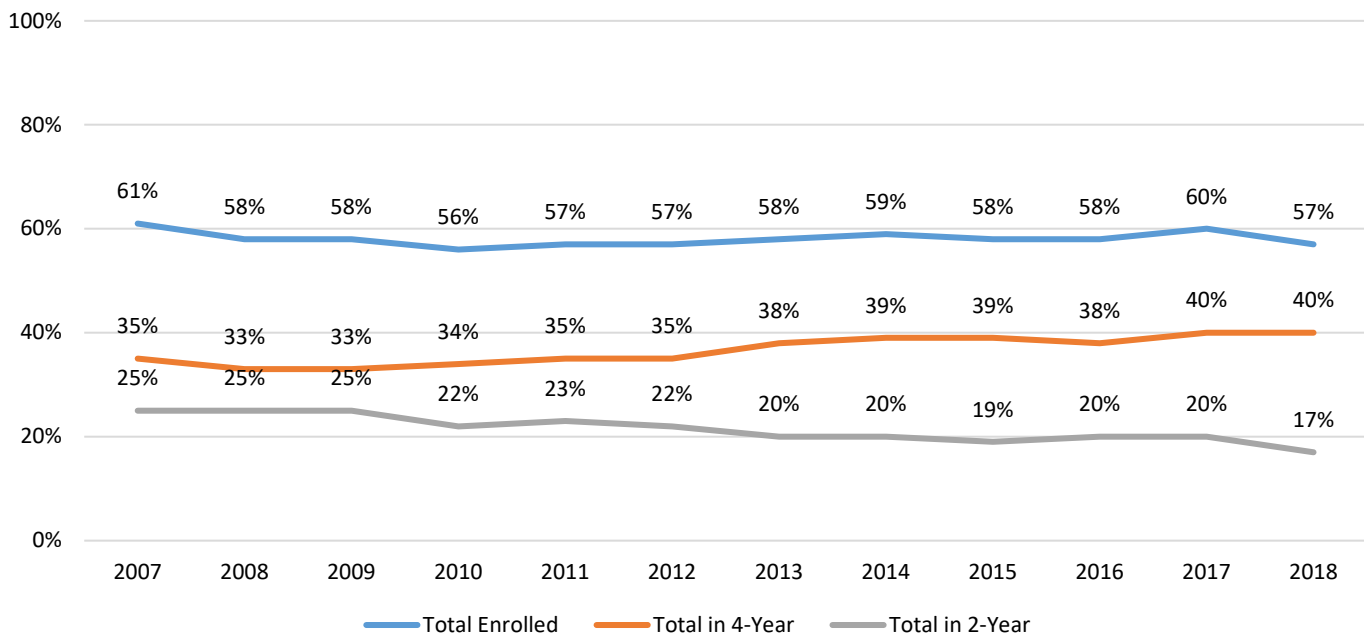
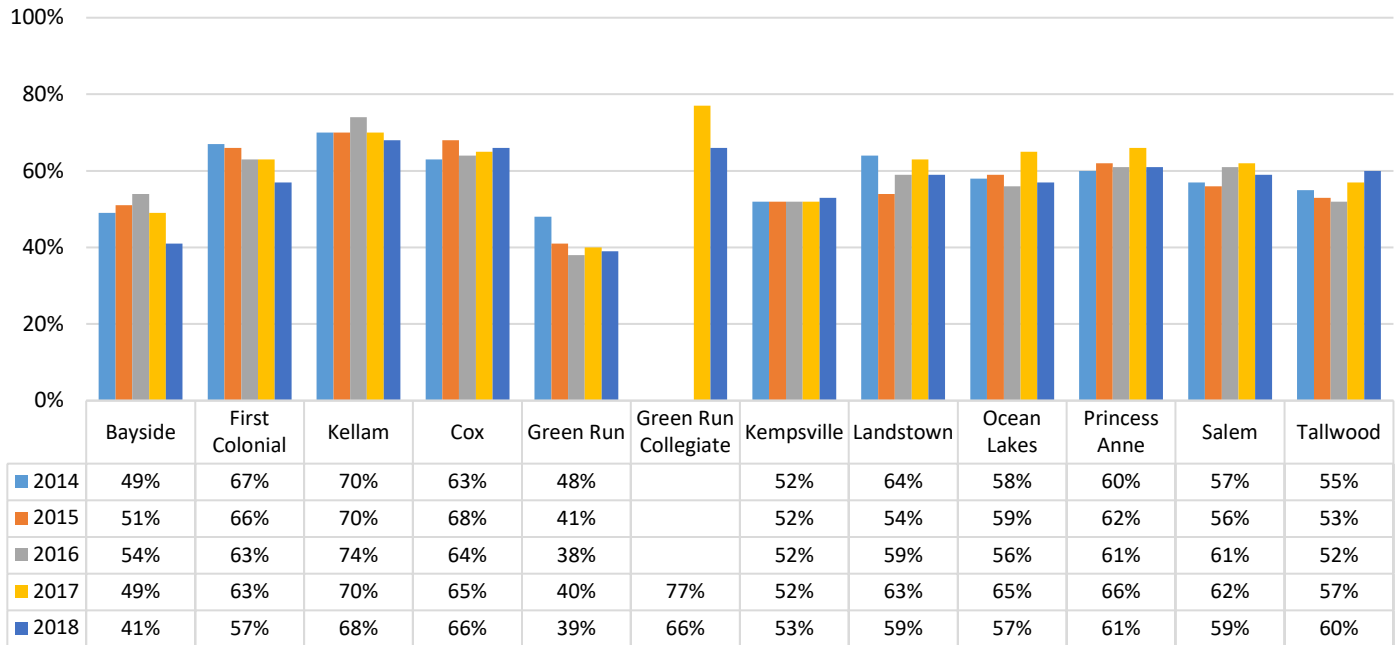


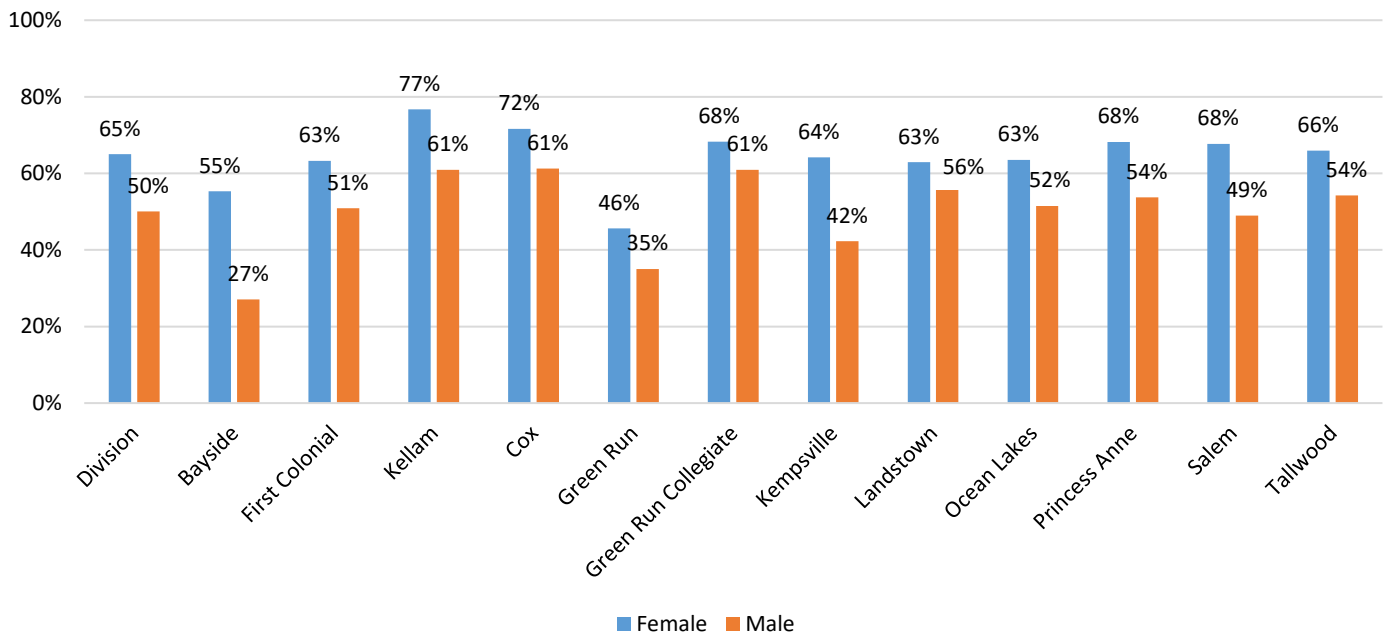
Figure 2 contains the school-level total enrollment percentages for the graduating classes of 2014 through 2018. College enrollment rates ranged from 39 to 68 percent for the Class of 2018 depending on school. Most schools met or exceeded the division’s college enrollment rate of 57 percent for the 2018 graduating class. Three schools, including Cox, Kempsville, and Tallwood, had higher college enrollment rates for the Class of 2018 compared to the prior year’s graduating class.

**Figure 2: Postsecondary Enrollment by School and Year - Immediately After High School**

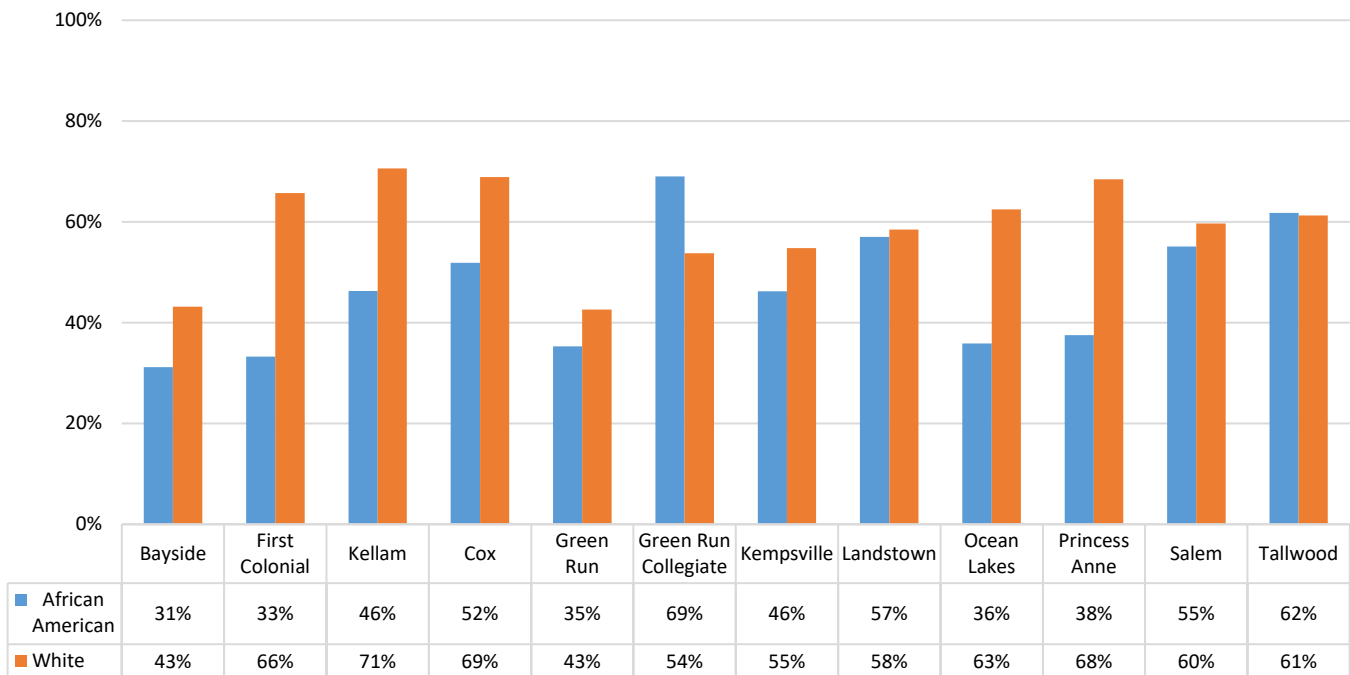
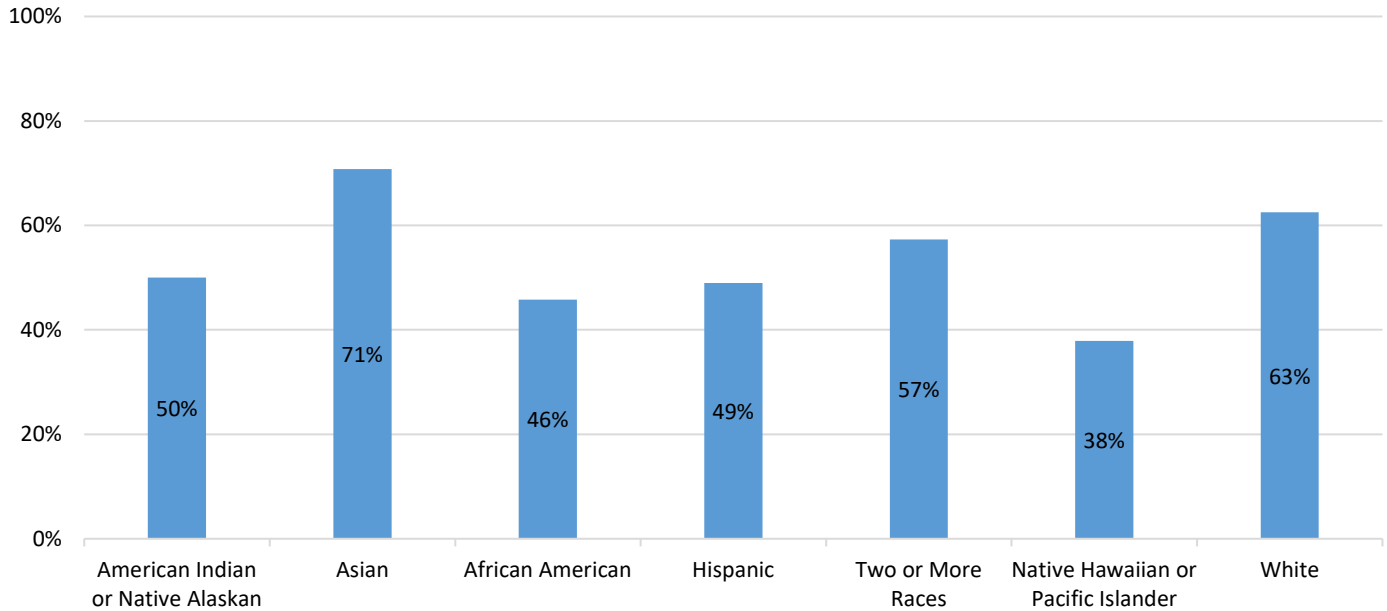


Gender and race/ethnicity data were provided to the NSC to be included in the enrollment reports. The NSC bases these percentages on the number of students within the subgroup who enrolled in college out of the total number of students in that subgroup who were in the graduating class. As can be seen in Figure 3, the percentage of female students from the entire Class of 2018 that enrolled immediately after high school was higher compared to male students at the division level and across all schools. Between 46 and 77 percent of female students in the Class of 2018 enrolled immediately following graduation depending on their school, and between 27 and 61 percent of male students in the Class of 2018 enrolled immediately following graduation depending on their school.

**Figure 3: Postsecondary Enrollment by School and Gender - Immediately After High School**

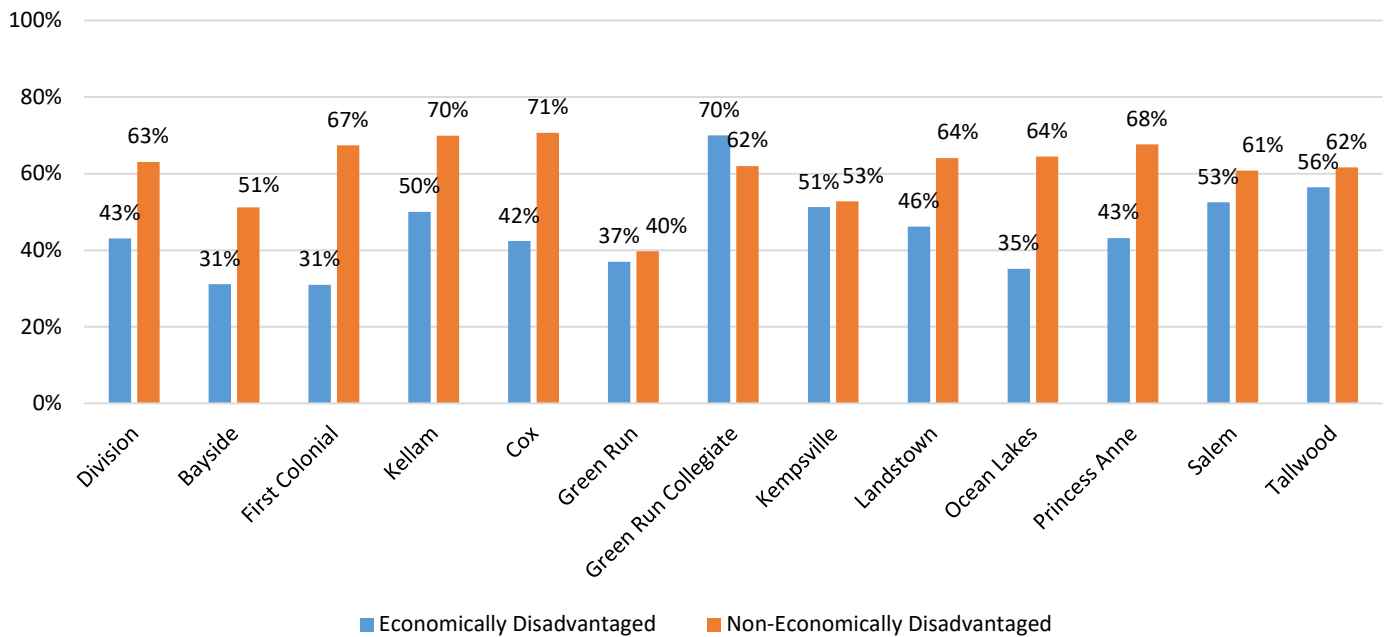


With regard to the race/ethnicities of the students in the Class of 2018, the subgroup with the largest percentage of graduates who enrolled immediately following graduation were Asian (71%) followed by White students (63%) (see Figure 4). The subgroup in the graduating class with the smallest percentage of students enrolling in a postsecondary institution was Native Hawaiian or Pacific Island students (38%). The school-level percentages for the two largest ethnic groups based on enrollment (African American and White) can be found in Figure 5 for the Class of 2018. While African American graduates at the division level were less likely to enroll in college than White graduates were, this was not the pattern at every school. A higher percentage of African American graduates at Green Run Collegiate and Tallwood High School enrolled in college than White graduates, and at Landstown and Salem high schools, the percentages were relatively similar.



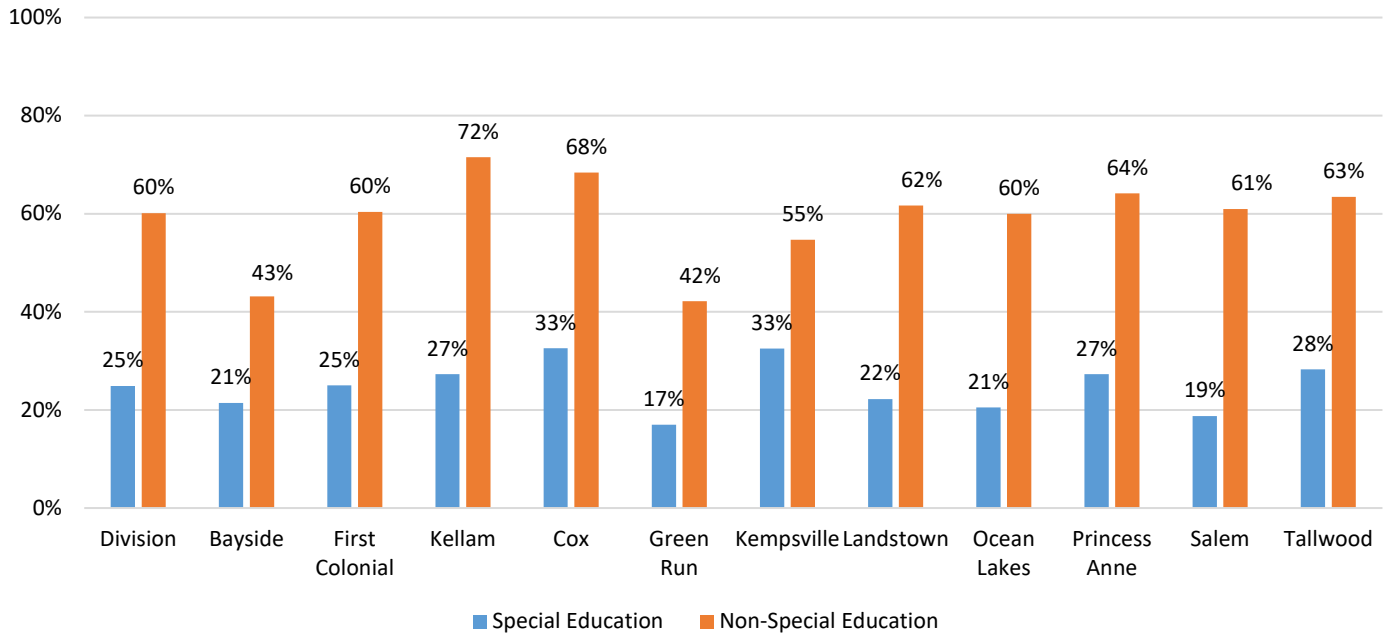
Displayed in Figure 6 are the division- and school-level enrollment percentages for the economically disadvantaged and non-economically disadvantaged graduates from the Class of 2018.<sup>3</sup> At the division level, 43 percent of the students who were identified as economically disadvantaged from the Class of 2018 enrolled in a postsecondary institution immediately following graduation. A higher percentage (63%) of the Class of 2018 who were not identified as being economically disadvantaged enrolled in a postsecondary institution. All VBCPS high schools except for Green Run Collegiate had a higher percentage of non-economically disadvantaged students from the graduating classes enrolled immediately following graduation ranging from 40 to 71 percent.

**Figure 6: Postsecondary Enrollment by School and Economic Status - Immediately After High School**



Displayed in Figure 7 are the division- and school-level enrollment percentages for the special education and non-special education graduates from the Class of 2018. At the division level, 25 percent of the students who were identified as special education students from the Class of 2018 enrolled in a postsecondary institution immediately following graduation. Sixty percent (60%) of the Class of 2018 who were not identified as being special education students enrolled in a postsecondary institution. All VBCPS high schools had a higher percentage of non-special education students from the graduating classes enroll in college immediately following graduation ranging from 42 to 72 percent. Green Run Collegiate is not represented in this chart due to having a reportable special education population below 10 students for this measure.

**Figure 7: Postsecondary Enrollment by School and Special Education Status - Immediately After High School**



**Any Time During the First Year After High School**

This section of the brief shows the division- and school-level figures for the high school graduates who enrolled in a postsecondary institution at any time during the first academic year following graduation (August 15 to August 14). Figure 8 shows the overall division-level enrollment percentages for the graduating classes of 2007 through 2017 along with the institution level. At the division level, the percentage of students who enrolled in a postsecondary institution within the first year following graduation ranged from 63 to 66 percent across the 11 cohorts. For the Class of 2017, the percentage of students enrolled anytime during the year after graduation was 64 percent, which was 4 percent higher than the percentage enrolled immediately after high school graduation.

**Figure 8: Division Postsecondary Enrollment by Year and Level - During the First Year After High School**

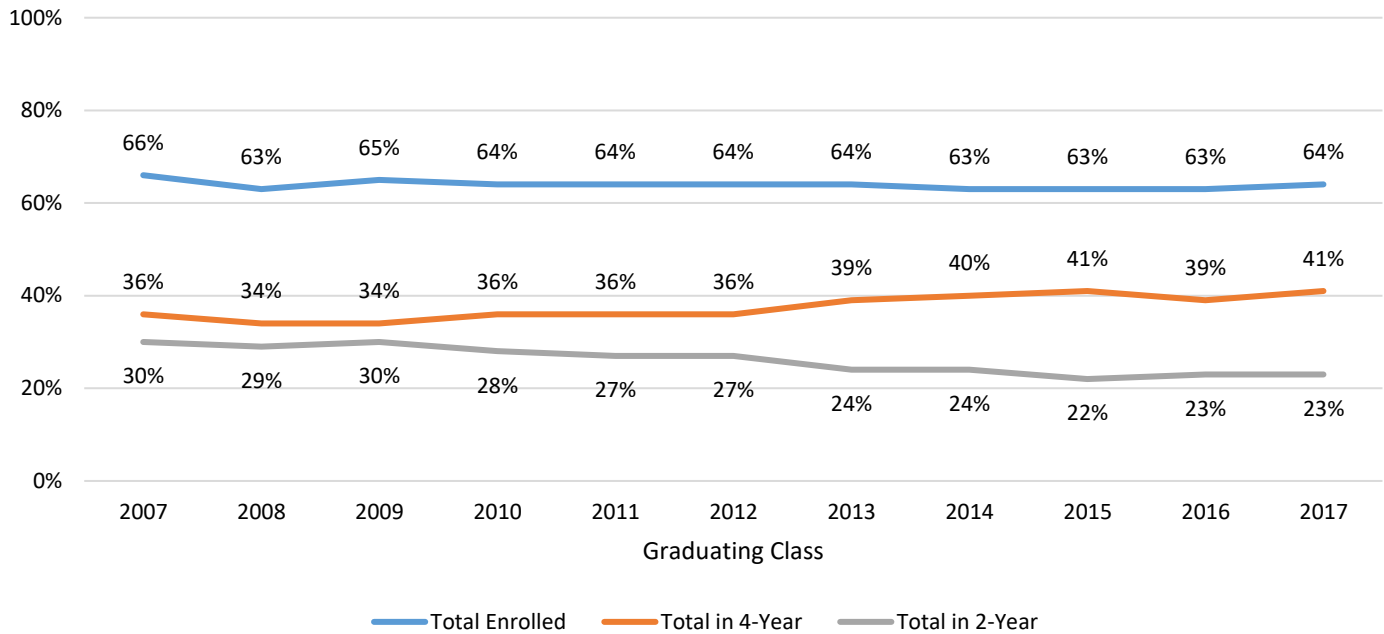
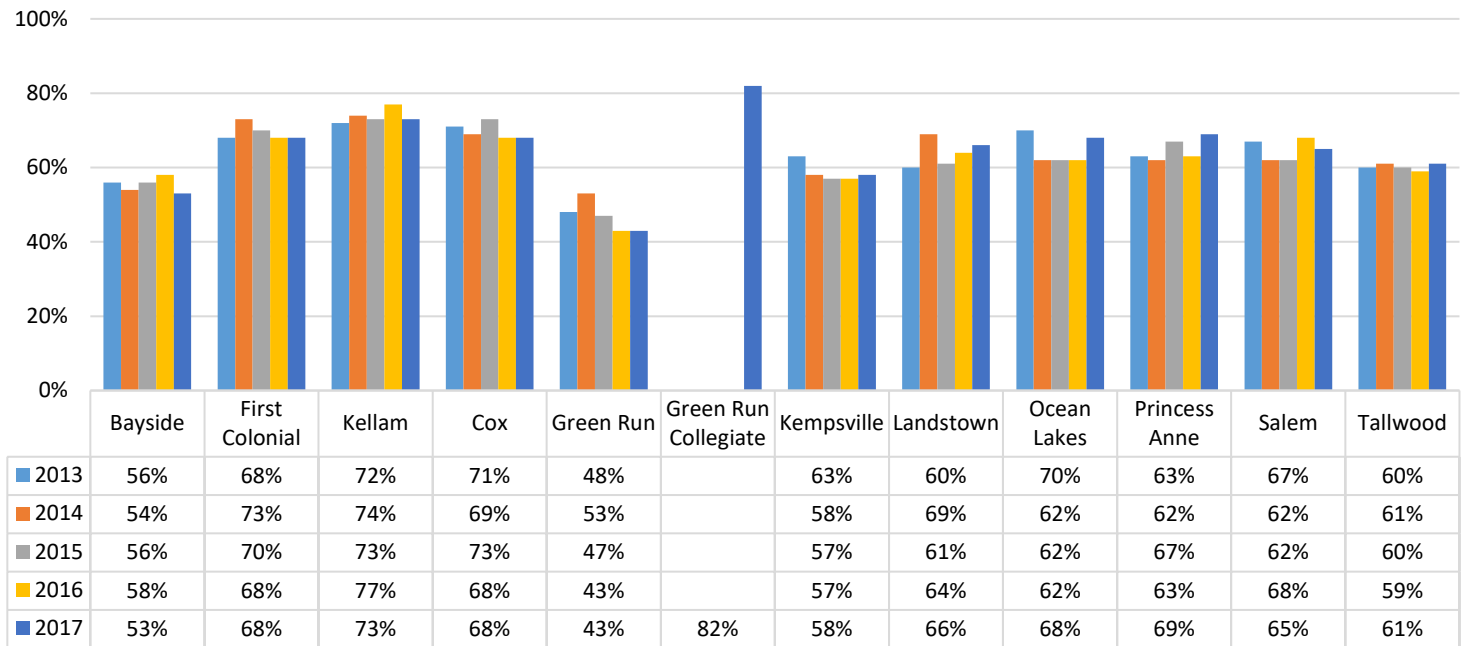


Figure 9 contains the school-level enrollment percentages for the graduating classes of 2013 through 2017. Within one year following graduation, between 43 and 82 percent of 2017 VBCPS graduates at each school enrolled in a postsecondary institution. Compared to immediate enrollment (Figure 2) for the Class of 2017, Kempsville High School experienced the largest increase in the percentage of students enrolled during the year following graduation, which was 6 percentage points.

**Figure 9: Postsecondary Enrollment by School and Year - During the First Year After High School**

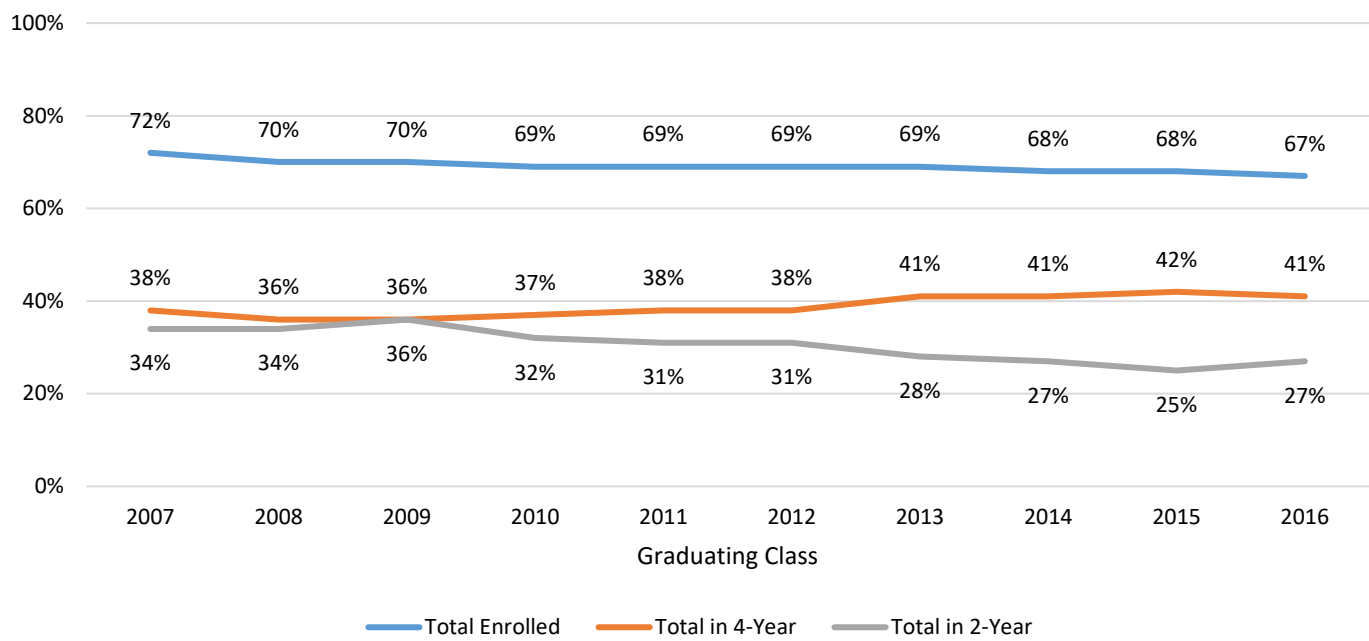


### Within Two Years After High School

This section describes the overall division-level percentage of graduates who enrolled in a postsecondary institution within two years following high school graduation. Based on this enrollment window, Figure 10 displays the percentages for the classes of 2007 through 2016 along with the institution level in which these students enrolled. Within two years after graduation, 67 to 72 percent of VBCPS graduates from the classes of 2007 to 2016 enrolled in a postsecondary institution. Between 36 and 42 percent enrolled in a four-year institution and 25 to 36 percent enrolled in a two-year institution within two years after graduation.

Compared to immediate enrollment during the fall after graduation (Figure 1), the overall percentage of Class of 2016 graduates who enrolled in postsecondary education within two years increased by 9 percentage points. The percentage of students enrolled in a two-year institution increased by 7 percentage points, and the percentage of students enrolled in a four-year institution increased by 3 percentage points.

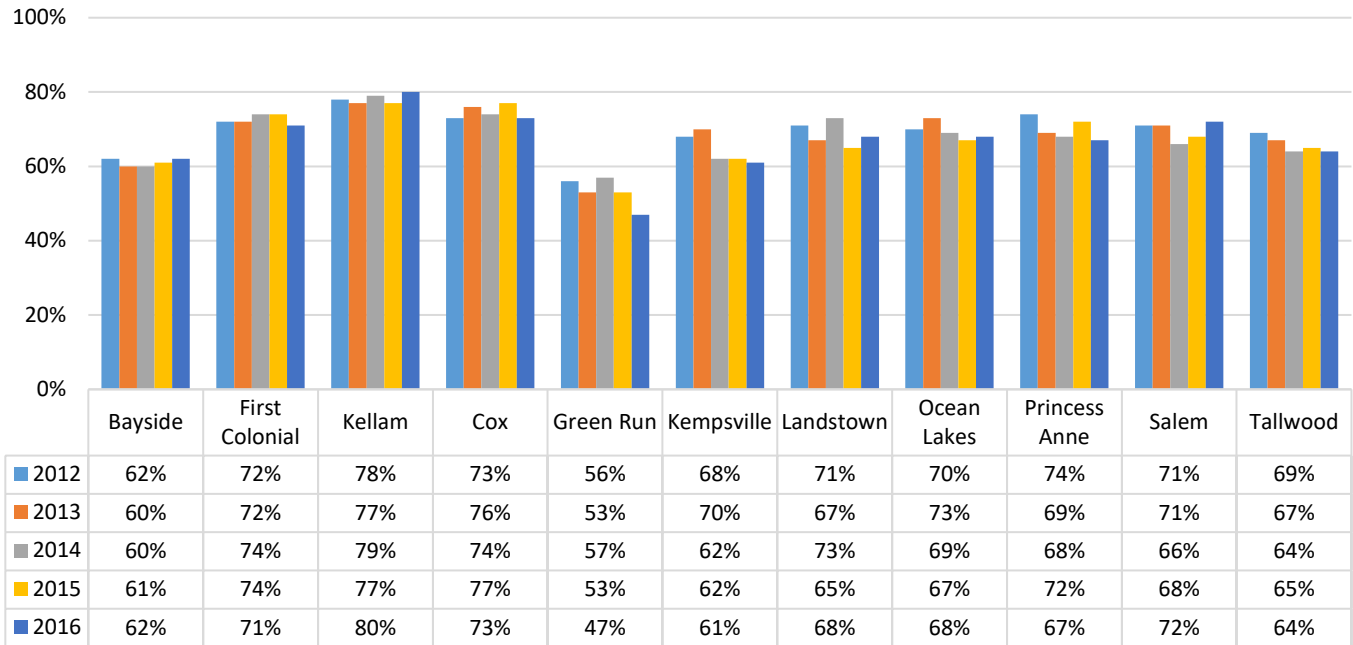
**Figure 10: Division Postsecondary Enrollment by Year and Level - Within Two Years After High School**



Provided in Figure 11 are the school-level enrollment percentages for students who enrolled within two years of graduation for the classes of 2012 through 2016. Within two years following graduation, between 47 and 80 percent of 2016 VBCPS graduates at each school enrolled in a postsecondary institution. Compared to immediate enrollment (Figure 2) for the Class of 2016, Ocean Lakes and Tallwood high schools experienced the largest increases in the percentage of students enrolled during the two years following graduation, which was 12 percentage points.



**Figure 11: Postsecondary Enrollment by School and Year - Within Two Years After High School**



### POSTSECONDARY PERSISTENCE

This section focuses on the percentage of students who remained enrolled in a postsecondary institution from the first year to the second year. It is important to note that the values in the figures represent the percentage of students who remained enrolled at any postsecondary institution and not necessarily retained at the same institution. Figure 12 shows the division’s total student percentages by institution level for the graduating classes of 2007 through 2016. Between 82 and 87 percent of VBCPS graduates who enrolled in a postsecondary institution returned for a second year.

For students who enrolled in a four-year institution, between 93 and 95 percent returned for a second year, which was noticeably higher compared to students attending a two-year institution (67% to 77%). For the Class of 2016, the persistence rate for students attending a four-year institution was 26 percentage points higher compared to the students attending a two-year institution. The persistence rate for VBCPS students at two-year institutions has shown a declining trend, especially since the Class of 2014, while the persistence rate of VBCPS students at four-year institutions has remained stable.

**Figure 12: Division Postsecondary Persistence From Freshman to Sophomore by Year and Level**

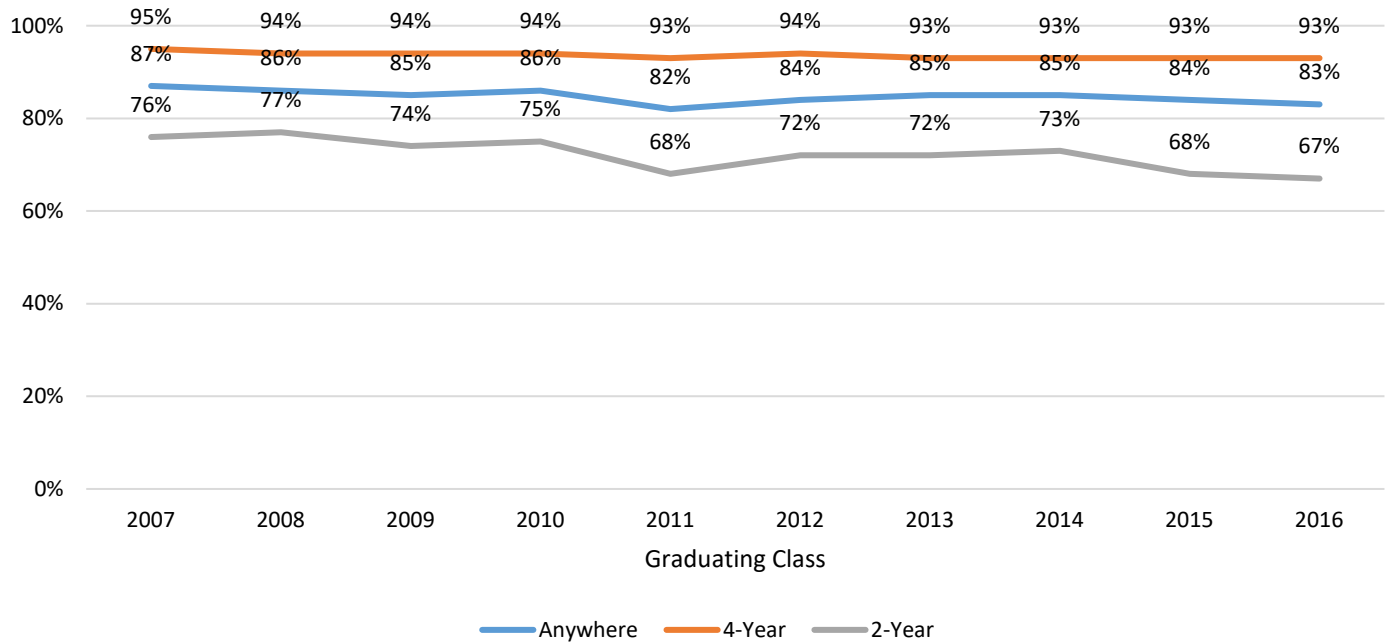
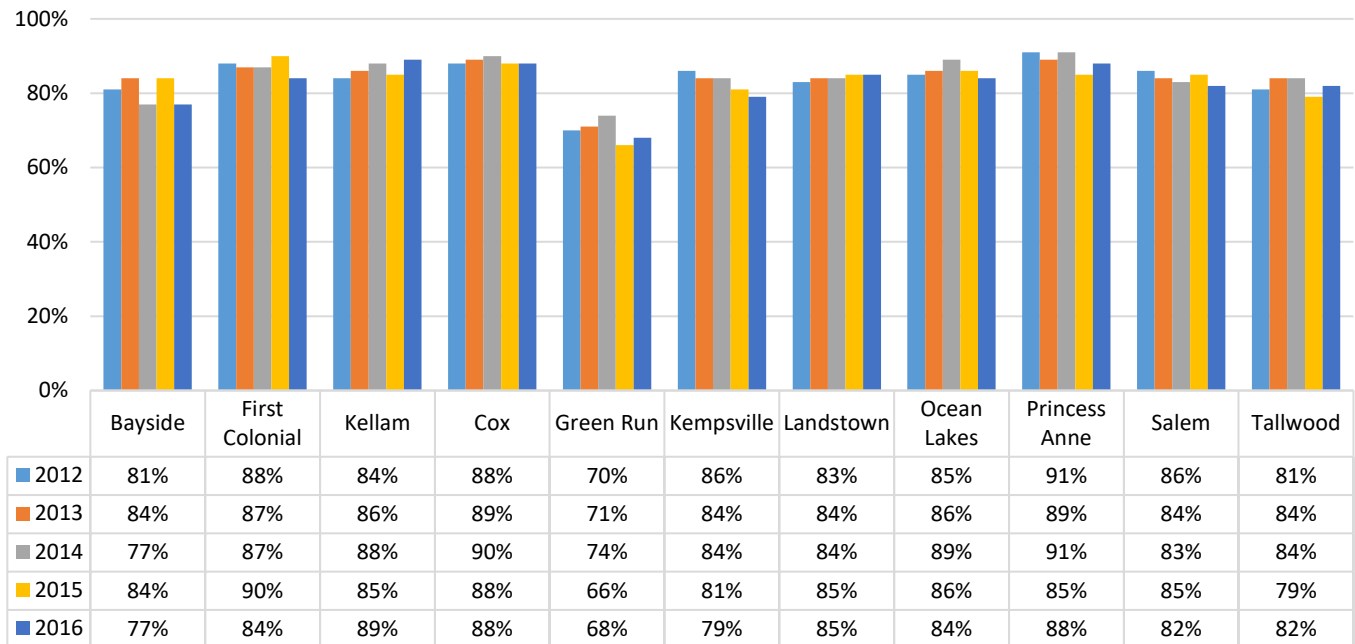


Figure 13 includes the student persistence percentages at the school level for 2012 through 2016 graduates. College persistence rates ranged from 68 to 89 percent for the Class of 2016 depending on school. Just over one-half of schools (55%) met or exceeded the division’s persistence rate of 83 percent for the 2016 graduating class. Four schools, including Kellam, Green Run, Princess Anne, and Tallwood, had higher persistence rates for the Class of 2016 compared to the prior year’s graduating class.

**Figure 13: Postsecondary Persistence by Year and School**



**DEGREE ATTAINMENT**

The percentage of students who completed a degree at a postsecondary institution is illustrated in Figure 14 for the 2008 through 2012 graduating classes. In order to be included, a student must have earned either an associate degree, bachelor's degree, or advanced degree within six years following enrollment. Overall, 25 percent of 2012 VBCPS graduates obtained a postsecondary degree within four years and 39 percent obtained a degree within six years.

**Figure 14: Division Postsecondary Time to Graduation**

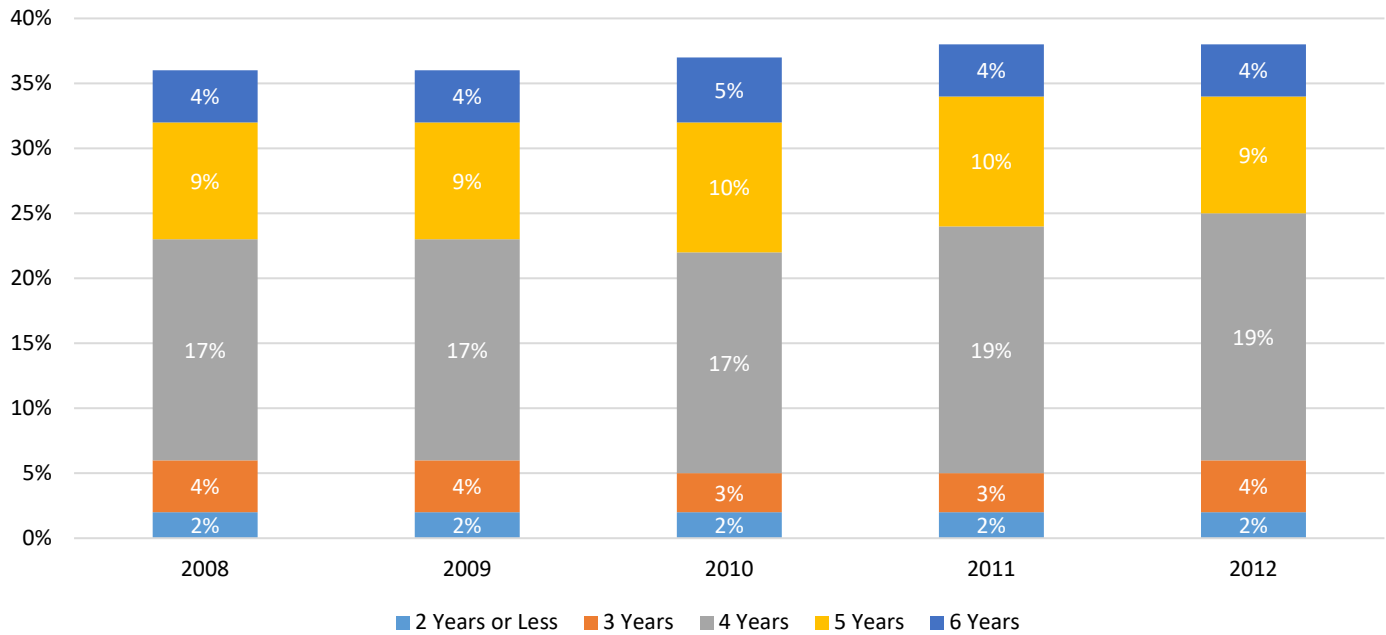
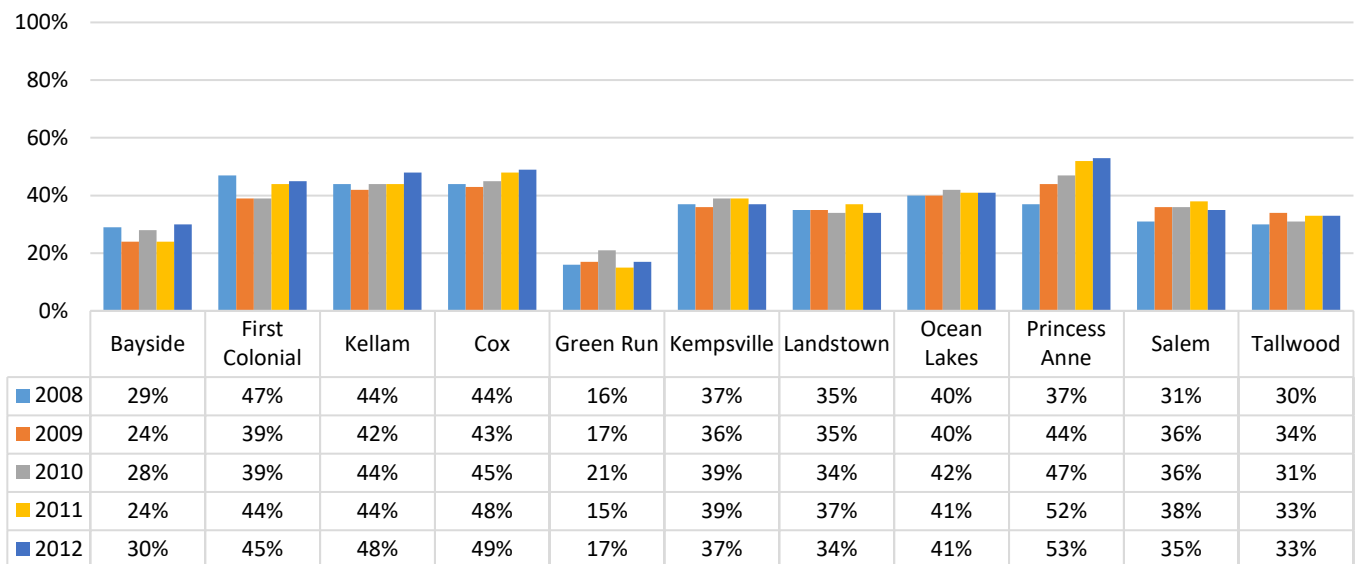


Figure 15 displays the percent of VBCPS graduates earning a degree within six years by school for the 2008 through 2012 graduating classes. College degree completion for all high schools ranged from 17 to 53 percent after six years for the most recent Class of 2012. Forty-five percent (45%) of schools met or exceeded the division’s degree attainment rate of 39 percent for the 2012 graduating class. Six schools, including Bayside, First Colonial, Kellam, Cox, Green Run, and Princess Anne, had higher degree attainment rates for the Class of 2012 compared to the prior year’s graduating class.

**Figure 15: Degree Attainment Within Six Years by School**



**SUMMARY**

The data provided by the NSC allow schools and school divisions to track the progress of their students and answer questions about postsecondary enrollment, persistence, and degree attainment. It also allows for the examination of enrollment choices that students make based on institutional level (i.e., 2-year and 4-year schools). Additionally, the data provide a picture of the postsecondary enrollment rates based on students' gender, ethnicity, economic status, and special education status.

Over the last 12 graduating classes, between 56 and 61 percent of VBCPS graduates continued their education immediately following high school. These enrollment percentages continued to increase over the course of two years after high school to between 67 and 72 percent. The largest percentage of VBCPS graduates who enrolled in a postsecondary institution chose to attend a four-year program. Of these students, between 93 and 95 percent persisted into their second year, whereas 67 to 77 percent enrolled at a two-year institution persisted into the second year. Based on the available demographic data for the Class of 2018, female students (65%) were more likely to continue their education compared to males (50%) at the division level. Asian graduates (71%) were the most likely to enroll immediately after high school and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander graduates (38%) were the least likely to enroll. At the division level, a larger percentage of non-economically disadvantaged graduates (63%) enrolled in a postsecondary institution compared to economically disadvantaged students (43%). Additionally, non-special education graduates (60%) were more likely than special education graduates (25%) to enroll in a postsecondary institution.

Approximately 25 percent of 2012 VBCPS graduates obtained a college degree within four years of enrolling in a postsecondary institution. This percentage increased to 39 percent after six years. Degree completion for the Class of 2012 at each high school ranged from 17 to 53 percent after six years.

**ENDNOTES**

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<sup>1</sup> Source: <http://studentclearinghouse.info/onestop/wp-content/uploads/STHS-Flyer.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> Data for students whose educational record indicates that they do not want their directory information released are not sent to the NSC.

<sup>3</sup> Data regarding each student’s economic status are not provided to the NSC. The percentages displayed are based on demographic data extracted from the VBCPS Data Warehouse, which was then combined with the NSC enrollment records.

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